

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Statement on World Press Freedom Day 2023

May 3, 2023

Journalism is not a crime; it is fundamental to a free society. Today, as we mark the 30th anniversary of World Press Freedom Day, we honor all the journalists, reporters, and media workers who bravely pursue the truth. And we renew our pledge to hold to account all those that seek to silence these voices essential to transparent and trustworthy governance.

As enshrined in the First Amendment of our Constitution, Congress shall pass no law "abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." That's because a free press is a pillar of democracy. It allows our Government and our society to be self-critical and self-correcting. It educates, illuminates, exposes, and uncovers. It serves as a guardian of truth.

No journalist—American or not—should have to risk their lives and livelihoods in pursuit of that truth. Evan Gershkovich and Austin Tice weigh heavy on my mind today. No family should have to endure the pain I've seen their families bear. But in far too many places around the world, autocrats and their enablers continue to repress a free and independent media through censorship, retribution, threats, lawsuits, harassment, disinformation, detention, and physical attacks.

Courageous journalists around the world have shown time and again that they will not be silenced or intimidated. The United States sees them and stands with them. That's why we're providing more resources than ever to support digital and physical security training for journalists, because no reporter should fear for his or her life because of the work they do. We're also working with partners around the world to launch a new fund dedicated to providing defense counsel to journalists. And we are providing funding to the Promoting Information Integrity and Resilience Initiative, which will help support a free and independent media, strengthen global information integrity, and help journalists do their jobs as safely as possible.

Today—and every day—we must all stand with journalists around the world. We must all speak out against those who wish to silence them. And we must all continue to support a free press that is essential to our democracy and democracies everywhere.

NOTE: The statement referred to Evan Gershkovich, a Wall Street Journal reporter who was arrested by Russian authorities on March 29; and Austin B. Tice, a reporter for McClatchy Newspapers who was abducted outside Damascus, Syria, on August 14, 2012.

Categories: Statements by the President : World Press Freedom Day.

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